POINT Board of Directors Meeting
8/28/91

Market Research Plan and Goals
Prepared by Tom White, Circulation Director

Presentation Agenda

1. Information to board on circulation activities and role of market research.
1. Input/feedback on market research purposes, goals and planning process.
2. Ideas on most effective use of research output.

I. Current Activities

In-House

The staff has discussed the need and impact of market research of our subscribers and prospects. Staff members have given me some input at these meetings and via the WELL.

I am circulating a memo serving as a summary and plan for WER market research. It should also serve as a basis for gaining agreement on the purposes and goals for WER market research.

Stanford Alumni Consulting Team (ACT)

The Stanford ACT Team is developing a reader survey as part of its work. This telephone survey of approximately 100 readers will serve as a trial for development of a larger mail survey, the latter currently planned to mail late December.

The ACT Team tele-survey is planned for September with results tabulated and analyzed by mid-October. Input from the ACT survey will assist us in preparing for all stages of the mail survey, and will also be useful in short term marketing efforts.

ACT members have also suggested setting up focus groups for cover studies and doing interviews with distributors. ?

II. Purpose of Market Research

1. Increase circulation.
2. Improve targeting/profitability for new business efforts.
3. Improve subscriber loyalty (renewal rates).
4. Improve ability of POINT/WER to systematically solicit reliable market information and incorporate it into regular planning cycles.

III. Problem Definition

Aside from a recent price test there has been no systematic survey and reporting of either WER readers, expires or prospective readers.

Reader input is encouraged and used but comes from a self-selected group of loyal readers and critics.

Statistically reliable input from the market is required for lower margins of error when considering improvements in editorial, design and subscriber retention/acquisition promotions.

IV. Prioritized Research Goals, Uses and Hypotheses

1A. Goal: Subscriber and prospect profiles.
1B. Use: a)Improve subscriber communications and 2)find most responsive sources for new readers.
1C. Hypotheses: a) The primary means of acquiring subscribers to date will not tell us how to get new subs because we've not done any new sub acquisition other than newstand and gifts.

b) If we find out how subs and prospects find/subscribe to similar magazines, that will apply to WER promotions.

c) Demographic information (age, income education) will help us improve communications with our readers. Doubtful if it will help narrow new source search.

2A. Goal: Market sizing.
2B. Use: For building scenarios and financial models for increasing circulation.
2C. Hypotheses a)Reader profiles will direct us to sources for new subs. Market sizing assumes we can expect a good percentage of new sub sources to respond.

3A. Goal: Understanding reader value and uses for WER articles/reviews
3B. Use: a) Input for positioning unique benefits and advantages of WER in renewal and subscriber acquisition efforts, b) making WER and ancillary products more valuable and responsive to reader needs through improving use of editorial resources.
3C. Hypotheses; a)learning how our readers value and use WER will make it easier to communicate WER's unique benefits to prospects as well as find new sub sources.

b) Feedback on our readers needs will position us to be more responsive with new articles and ancillary spinoffs. The more we learn about what our readers what the more relevant we will be.

4A. Goal: Feedback on WER readibility/presentation.
4B. Use: Improve usefulness through review of and changes in design and editorial presentation.

5A. Goal: Set baseline for reader views and profiles.
5B. Use: Assist in a) measuring changes in reader views and profiles and b) planning and scheduling future research efforts.

Methodology and Timelines

1. Solicit staff input by 9/6.
2. Develop ACT trial survey questions by 9/13.
3. Implement phone and mail survey by 9/30.
4. Develop computer program for analysis of trial survey results. Complete by 9/30.
5. Analyze and report results. Complete by 10/15
6. Incorporate results into ongoing promotional efforts and larger mail survey development.
7. Develop larger phone/mail survey. Complete questionairre by 12/15.
8. Mail survey first class 1/3/92.
9. Do postcard and phone follow-up as necessary. 1/31-2/14.
10. Collate and analyze results 2/14/-2/28.
11. Report results 3/15/92.